

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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PEACE MOVEMENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

I. General Assessment

1. Diversity is the most striking single characteristic of peace movements abroad. Indeed, it is this very diversity which makes it impossible to attach specific political or ideological labels to any significant section of the movement. Diversity means that there is no single focus in the movement.

2. Under the peace umbrella in non-Communist countries one finds pacifists and fighters, idealists and materialists, internationalists and isolationists, democrats and totalitarians, conservatives and revolutionaries, capitalists and socialists, patriots and subversives, lawyers and anarchists, Stalinists and Pekingese, racists and universalists, zealots and nonbelievers, puritans and hippies, do-gooders and evil-doers, nonviolent and very violent. These diverse and sundry groups sometimes pull together, sometimes pull apart, and sometimes tread their own individual paths.

3. Opposition to US actions in Vietnam is the keystone of the peace movement. Given the wide

-1-

No Foreign Dissem

variety among the participants, however, it is obvious that confusion and a great deal of disagreement cannot help but be manifested in the peace group's activities. This was clearly demonstrated at the Second International War Crimes Tribunal held in Roskilde, Denmark, from 20 November to 2 December last year (see Section IV for details).

4. Perhaps the key question with respect to foreign peace movements is whether or not they are effective. The answer is not a simple yes or no. It is clear that Vietnam does not have the same meaning for the man-in-the-street Englishman, Italian, Egyptian, Israeli, South African, Malian, Indian, Pakistani, Mexican, etc., as it does for Americans. Most people in foreign countries--whether their governments are democracies, right-wing dictatorships, or military juntas--are largely apathetic toward Vietnam. In the democracies, however, where free speech is permitted, small, vocal minorities do vent their opposition to the Vietnam war in peace movements. Press, radio, and TV coverage publicize their activities far out of proportion to the actual effect. Peace activists thrive on publicity, and there is no doubt that the attendant publicity

breeds more peace activity. The peace movement thus is influential to the extent that it causes difficulties for various governments in countries that are either allied to or friendly with the US and occasionally breeds strains in their relations with the US. In no case, however, have these difficulties caused a change in these friendly governments' policy.

5. In non-Communist countries, local Communists of one stripe or another--orthodox Communists with ties to Moscow, Trotskyite revolutionaries, or Maoists--are active and willing participants in the peace movements. No evidence has been uncovered to indicate that their influence is so great as to permit them to control the movement. The Communist role is, however, a very substantial one in some instances. The Communists, particularly those of the orthodox variety, exploit and benefit from anti-US activities with regard to Vietnam--demonstrations, protests, petitions, etc.--but there is no evidence that they have directed such activities.

6. With regard to some Western European democracies and to certain other countries such as Japan,

New Zealand, and Canada, one can generalize that the peace movements, though small, are a force to be reckoned with and embarrass the governments in their relations with the US. Peace movements are not permitted in non-Communist countries with paternalistic governments. Such governments do not allow any kind of overt opposition to their domestic and foreign policies. This rules out peace movements in most of Latin America and in most of the non-Communist countries of Asia. In Africa, preoccupation with the struggle for survival and the attempts to create viable states allow very little time for public concern over foreign international issues such as Vietnam. In the Middle East, both the "radical" and "conservative" Arab states are far too involved in area quarrels and in the contest with Israel to give much thought to broader international questions. The peace movement in most of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and non-Communist Asia, where it exists at all, is tiny and ineffectual.

7. In Communist countries, the peace movement is merely another propaganda arm of the governments. Each Communist state has its "peace committee" that echoes the government line on international issues.

Because North Vietnam is Communist, one of the key foreign policy questions for other Communist states is the Vietnam war and particularly the US role in that war. One of the chief aims of Communist propaganda today is to blacken the US for its part in the Vietnam war, and the "peace committee" is one of the principal tools in this propaganda campaign.

8. Current quarrels within the Communist movement have, however, to a great extent blunted the effect of this campaign. Moscow and Havana have trouble resolving their respective positions on the revolutionary or peaceful road to change in Latin America. Peking and Tirana charge that Moscow is "colluding" with the US in an effort to run the world and sabotage the Vietnamese Communists. Moscow in return charges Peking with undermining Hanoi and the Viet Cong because Peking's stand prevents Communist "unity" in opposing the US position in Vietnam. Thus even the Communist peace movement is disjointed and diffuse.

II. The World Peace Council and the Peace Movement  
In Communist Countries

1. Almost two decades ago, during the coldest days of the Cold War, the USSR set up the World Peace Council (WPC)--one of its better known international front organizations. Its principal aim was to stir opposition in the non-Communist world against US foreign policy. The heyday of the WPC was the Korean War when the organization was used to publicize and spread false charges that the US was using germ warfare and committing genocide during the war. The WPC's effectiveness, however, was impaired during the first several years of its existence by its rather obvious dependence on the USSR and its function as a Soviet tool.

2. The WPC had some difficulty over the years rallying independent pacifists and peace organizations to its cause. In recent years, however, growing apprehension over the possibility of a nuclear war, and mounting sentiment in some quarters against US actions in Vietnam have enhanced the WPC's role as an anti-US weapon, and have served to overshadow somewhat its Communist origin and control. During the past few years there has been an increased

willingness on the part of non-Communist pacifist groups, emotionally caught up in the burning issues of the day, to join forces with any and all other antiwar movements--whether or not the Communists predominate. At present most "peace agitation" is focused directly on the Vietnam war, and non-Communist peace groups are demonstrating an increased willingness to cooperate with the WPC.

3. The WPC is amply funded and maintains a full-time staff. It is thus able to make its voice heard frequently and under different guises. The Communists no longer blatantly run the show, as they did for years, and now operate behind the scenes. (The present head of the WPC, a figurehead, is an Indian leftist.) This change in tactics has thus allowed the WPC to be relatively successful in enlisting abroad several individuals and organizations not so easily dismissed as "Soviet agents." Its overtures to other peace organizations have become increasingly sophisticated and flexible.

4. Moscow's use of the WPC was demonstrated in February 1968 in connection with the North Korean seizure of the US naval ship Pueblo. On 4 February, the Soviet news agency TASS carried a statement,

purportedly released by the WPC, which condemned "the US spy ship Pueblo for penetrating North Korean waters." The pronouncement went on to denounce alleged US "aggression" against Laos and Cambodia, and appealed to "all peace-loving forces to expand actions" against US policy in Vietnam. Such statements of support not only complement other Communist propaganda activity, but also buttress Russian attempts to win favor in Pyongyang and Hanoi.

5. The basic unit of the peace movement in the USSR and other Communist countries is the "peace committee." Communist countries set up individual peace committees when the WPC was established in 1949. These national committees organize and coordinate various peace programs, particularly on the basis of the resolutions and recommendations of the WPC. The leadership of these committees usually comprises prominent people who are internationally recognized in fields unrelated to politics--well-known educators, nuclear physicists, historians, biologists, or writers who are often high-ranking officials in their respective unions or academies. For example, one of the leading Soviet peace



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No Foreign Dissem

activists is Georgiy Zhukov. Long associated with Pravda and the State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, he has traveled extensively and is well known all over the world.

6. The national peace committees coordinate the activities of regional and municipal peace committees as well as local social, religious, and cultural organizations which become involved in various aspects of the peace movement. The peace committees are also active in holding mass meetings on international issues and in collecting signatures on various petitions. For the most part, however, they are not used to promote violence against foreign embassies or property. Their chief aim is propaganda rather than action.

7. North Vietnam's peace committee is considerably more active than those in the other Communist states. In recent years, the activities of the Vietnam Peace Committee have centered on US involvement in the war. Many mass meetings have been sponsored in Hanoi by the committee in support of the "antiwar movement in the US." Leaders of the committee have on occasion met with US and other non-Communist foreign peace activists in North Vietnam

-9-

No Foreign Dissem

**SECRET**

and abroad. The committee has also played a role in handling the interviewing of US prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

8. Because of the Sino-Soviet split and Moscow's domination of the WPC, the Chinese peace committee has gone virtually unmentioned by Peking in recent years. It has apparently been supplanted for most propaganda purposes by national "friendship" societies such as the Chinese-Vietnamese Friendship Association. China has also virtually withdrawn from participation in the WPC.

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IV. The Second International War Crimes Tribunal:

An Exercise in Futility

1. The Second International War Crimes Tribunal (IWCT) was held in the ancient cathedral town of Roskilde, Denmark, some 20 miles outside of Copenhagen, from 20 November to 2 December 1967. As expected the Tribunal found: a) the United States committed aggression against Laos; b) the US military experimented with weapons in Vietnam forbidden by international law; c) US forces subjected Vietnamese prisoners to treatment violating international rules; d) the civil population in Vietnam has been subjected to inhuman treatment; e) the United States has committed genocide in Vietnam; and f) the governments of Thailand, Japan, and the Philippines are guilty of complicity in the US "aggression." (The governments of Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea were adjudged guilty of such complicity at the first session.)

2. What the Tribunal was really after, however, was world-wide publicity blackening the United States and its allies in Asia. It wanted to engender opposition, especially in Western Europe, to US policy

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in Vietnam by means of a massive propaganda campaign which would portray the United States, its President and other leaders, and its soldiers in the field as barbarians and monsters. In this effort, the IWCT was a complete failure. Most of the publicity it did obtain was pointed at its own internal bickerings and the fiasco of Ralph Schoenman's unsuccessful attempt to get into Denmark in order to participate. Schoenman, an American citizen, is the personal secretary of Lord Bertrand Russell, the prime mover of the Tribunal. Western press attention to these details--rather than the "testimony"--drew sharp censure from the Tribunal. The Tribunal also complained about the almost complete lack of attention given it in the London and Paris press. These complaints fell on deaf ears. When the Western European papers did refer to the IWCT, they called it "circus Schoenman."

3. It has been reported that for all intents and purposes the IWCT is "finished" and that the present secretariat in Paris will be abolished. Although a "continuation committee" was established to keep alive the basic framework of the Tribunal, it will have no activist role and is, in fact, no more

No Foreign Dissem

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than the expression of a compromise gesture to the French Trotskyites who ran the show and did not want to see the Tribunal disbanded completely. Moreover, the "continuation committee" consists of only one person, who is primarily a liaison officer.

4. No action was taken to create a new, permanent international organization out of a base of the IWCT, such as a previously proposed World Vietnam Committee (WVC). The French activists who controlled the session made a bid for support in organizing a new WVC, but could not muster sufficient international support--faced as they were with the wide and deep-seated factional differences among the various leftists, Communists, and Trotskyites supporting the IWCT. Because of the difficulty of finding mutually acceptable new leadership, organizational policy, and action programs, the idea of creating a new WVC out of the old IWCT was abandoned. If a new international organization is set up in the future, it will probably be created from scratch and will not be a derivation of the old IWCT.